

Early Intervention FAQs

What is "Early Intervention?"

"Early Intervention" is an array of services to help infants and toddlers, birth to three with disabilities or delays in their development. Early Intervention Services supports families, through education and family services, to help their children reach their potential.

Why is "Early Intervention" important?

Because...

- Early intervention can have a definite, long-lasting impact on how children develop, learn, and regulate their emotions. It plays an important role in healthy development.
- The human brain has a remarkable ability to change, but timing is crucial. A child develops faster during the critical years from birth to three than at any other time. Timely intervention can improve the prospects and the quality of life for many children.
- Early intervention is cost-effective, and can maximize the potential for independence.

Who provides early intervention services and where are services provided?

Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS) provides services to children birth to three with developmental delay or disabilities, and their families. Services for your child are provided in the home, or wherever your child is during the day, such as your child's day care, or a neighborhood playgroup. These places are referred to as natural environments.

Who is eligible for Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS)?

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A child (under the age of 36 months) of any Nevada resident who:

1. has a diagnosed condition such as Down syndrome, spina bifida, autism, blindness, deafness, or other diagnosed condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay, or
2. shows significant delays in development such as talking or walking.

Who can refer a child?

Anyone who has a concern about a child's development may make a referral. This includes parents, guardians, foster parents and family members; professionals such as pediatricians, other physicians, social workers, nurses, child care providers; or others who have contact with the child. If someone other than the child's parents makes the referral, the parents will be contacted for their permission before any action is taken.

How do I refer a child?

You may call **Project ASSIST** at the toll free phone number **1-800-522-0066**. You will be given the telephone number of the program for the city in which you live. All information is confidential.

What is Project ASSIST?

Project ASSIST is a Nevada central resource directory for anyone seeking information about organizations, programs or agencies that provide services and supports for children and young adults up to 21 years with disabilities, and their families. There is no cost for this service. The toll free phone number is **1-800-522-0066**

or Email to ProjectAssist@dhhs.nv.gov.

Information is available on:

- parent support groups
- respite care
- screening, diagnosis and assessment
- early intervention programs for infants and toddlers
- education, health, and social service agencies
- vocational training
- therapies
- counseling and psychological services
- advocacy organizations
- life planning, financial and legal assistance
- as well as many other services.

How do I know if my child is eligible for Early Intervention Services?

Contact your early intervention program. Your early intervention provider will meet with you to determine whether your child is eligible. Your child may be determined to be eligible in one of two ways:

A child (under the age of 36 months) of any Nevada resident who:

1. An evaluation of your child's development shows there is a significant developmental delay.
2. Your child has a diagnosed condition that is expected to lead to a developmental delay.

Who will contact the family?

NEIS Program staff will contact the family to schedule an evaluation and, if the child is eligible, begin the process of planning for services and supports.

What if my child is eligible for early intervention services?

If your child is eligible, you and the other team members will develop, within 45 days from your child's referral to the program, a plan called an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). You will work with the team to develop outcomes for your child and family. The IFSP you and the team develop will explain how, where and when your family will work with the early intervention team. You will be given more information about the IFSP process at that time.

What is an IFSP?

The IFSP or Individualized Family Service Plan, is a written plan determined by the parents and the IFSP team, designed to help everyone understand what is going to happen, who is going to be involved, how, when and where supports will take place, and for how long.

What if my child is not eligible for early intervention services?

If your child is not eligible the program will offer you a way to keep track of your child's progress. Any concerns you may have in the future can then be easily addressed. Other community resources may be identified for your child and family.

How are services delivered?

Service providers work with your family to support your child's development through the natural activities your family participates in every day. Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that services for eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities **must** be provided in a *natural environment*,

settings that are **natural or typical** for a same-aged infant or toddler **without** a disability, to the maximum extent appropriate.

What are Natural Environments?

Natural environments are homes or other community settings in which children would naturally be if they did not have a disability. **If** it is an environment created for children with disabilities or they only attend because they have a disability, it is not a natural environment.

Early intervention services may include any of the following:

- Assistive technology devices and services
- Audiological services
- Speech and language services
- Family training, counseling, and home visits
- Health services necessary to benefit from other early intervention services
- Medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- Nutrition services
- Nursing services (for developmental purposes)
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Service Coordination
- Specialized instruction
- Social work services
- Transportation necessary to receive early intervention services
- Vision and mobility services

In most cases, services are delivered in settings that are natural for that child, including the family home, child care settings, and other places where children usually spend time. More information can be found in your early intervention services Parent Handbook.

What is the cost to families?

There is no cost to the family. With parental permission NEIS may bill your private insurance.

How do we decide how often my child will need services?

There is no set criteria for how often or how many services are needed. Every child is different. How often you and your child receive services depends on a number of things:

- Your child's individual needs
- How quickly your child learns new things.

The visit schedule may change over time. You and your team will measure your child's progress and make changes to your IFSP when needed.

Do we need to get therapy in a clinic?

A clinic setting should only be used when specific equipment is necessary to achieve an outcome and is not transportable, for example audiological equipment. Children learn best in a *natural environment* and when they are comfortable and happy. When children learn skills in a clinic, they may not be able to use those skills as well outside the clinic. It is important for children to learn new skills in many places with different people. This will make it easier for them to use the skills in familiar, everyday activities, such as at home or in the community.

I work all day, can my team members work with my babysitter or childcare center teacher?

It is important that everyone who takes care of your baby knows how to meet his/her special needs and teach him/her new skills, including people who care for him/her while you are at work. Nevada Early Intervention Services staff will work with you and others to help your baby learn, at home, at child care and in the community.

What Can I Expect From My Service Coordinator?

Your Service Coordinator will....

- Interpret evaluation results and observations
- Guide you in setting priorities for your child and family
- Help coordinate services and information from different sources
- Help you find answers to questions you have about your child
- Find opportunities for you to connect with other families
- Help you talk with other specialists involved with your child and family, such as medical providers and child care staff
- Offer information on helpful state and community resources or supports
- Coach you on ways to teach your child new skills during your regular routine and activities

What if my child is age 3 or older?

Services are available for children and young adults with a disability, ages 3 to 21, through your local school district. The telephone number can be found in the white pages of the phone book. A referral for assessment may be made to the school district child find program. This may lead to individualized testing for children and young adults who may require specialized assistance and/or support services. To begin this process, contact your local school district.

What happens when my child, who is participating in early intervention services, turns three years old?

Your child is no longer eligible for early intervention services after age three. At least six months before your child turns three, your Service Coordinator will assist you in planning a move to the next service provider or agency. In early intervention, this change is called transition and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires a written plan for this transition. A transition plan meeting with the school district must take place at least 90 days before your child turns three. Your transition plan will identify special education or community-based services your child may need. More information can be found in your early intervention services Parent Handbook.

Your Service Coordinator will ask you to sign a permission form so the next agency or service provider can be contacted to plan for transition. A meeting between you, your Service Coordinator, service provider(s) and the local school district will be set up.

The school district determines if your child is eligible for preschool special education services. They will discuss the results of their tests with you and give you information about your rights. If your child is eligible, their services will be provided through an Individual Education Program (IEP).

Your Service Coordinator will assist you in planning a move to other possible services if your child is not eligible for special education preschool services.

A few Tips for the Transition Meeting:

- gather as much information as possible about the proposed change
- ask about possible program options or choices
- ask what training and supports the new program offers families

- visit the new program before the change
- ask for written materials and learn the procedures for entering and participating in the new program
- provide as much information about your child as possible to the new program

What are my rights?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) provides you with certain rights and protections. The early intervention program will provide you with a written explanation of your rights. If at any time you are not sure of your rights, please ask your early intervention service coordinator.

How can I be more involved?

There are many ways that you and your family can get involved with Early Intervention Services beyond the services and support activities specifically designed for you. You have an important role in planning and developing services for your child. You can provide valuable input from a parent's perspective. You can help support other parents. You can also assist in the development of policies and take part in planning how your community provides services. There are a variety of opportunities for parent involvement. Ask your Service Coordinator for further information or call **Project ASSIST** at **1-800-522-0066** / Email to ProjectAssist@dhhs.nv.gov.

What is the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)?

The duties of the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) are to advise and assist the state in the performance of their duties as identified by federal regulations. The Governor appoints the members of the Interagency Coordinating Council. The composition of the Council is to be at least 20 percent parents of children with disabilities, aged 12 or younger. Additionally, 20 percent of the Council is to be public or private service providers. At least one member is to be from the state legislature and the remaining members represent agencies involved in personnel preparation, early intervention services, Department of Education, Medicaid, Health Insurance, Mental Health, Foster Care, Head Start, child care, and others as identified by the Governor.

The ICC also has other opportunities for participation on various committees, subcommittees, task forces, and work groups. If you would like more information you can call **Project ASSIST** at **1-800-522-0066** or Email to ProjectAssist@dhhs.nv.gov.

Who can I contact with a question?

You can call the early intervention program in your area or the Bureau of Early Intervention Services Office at 775-688-0487 or **Project ASSIST** at **1-800-522-0066** / Email to ProjectAssist@dhhs.nv.gov.

How can I get connected with other parents who have been through what I am going through now?

Your local early intervention service coordinator can connect you with other parent support groups or call: **Project ASSIST** at 1-800-522-0066 / Email to ProjectAssist@dhhs.nv.gov.

Early Childhood Special Education Library

One of the resources available to families, professionals, educators, and staff working with young children with disabilities is the resource library located in the IDEA Part C office. This library contains hundreds of books, videos, and other materials regarding children, families, disabilities, and early childhood. This library is available for use statewide; individuals can come in and browse the library or request materials via mail. The catalogue is located on the Library page.

For more information you can call **Project ASSIST** at 1-800-522-0066 or Email to ProjectAssist@dhhs.nv.gov.